

9/13

March 1, 2011

To the Labor and Public Employees Committee

Testimony in favor of SB 913

I believe that there are many good reasons to support paid sick day legislation and none to oppose it.

There can be no doubt that they benefit working families and especially woman. I'm sure that others will testify as to how paid sick days lower our state health care costs, increase business productivity, and improves our public health.

A growing number of studies demonstrate that paid sick days do not impact negatively on business and job growth and, in fact, have a positive effect.

San Francisco enacted paid sick days in 2007. The DRUM Institute studied the effect of paid sick days on San Francisco businesses and issued a report in 2010 that stated:

- There was no evidence that business and job growth had been harmed by paid sick leave.
- The main findings were consistent with a large and growing body of research that shows paid sick leave to be a cost-effective policy with positive outcomes for employers and employees, including increased worker productivity, reduced spread of illness, and other health and economic benefits.

In a December, 2010 CareerBuilder survey of over 3700 workers, 72% reported that they go to work when they are sick. More than half felt guilty about it. And 52% said they became sick from a co-worker. Another 12% figured that they had caught a bug from someone on public transportation.

People go to work not because of some perverse desire to infect others, they do so because they can't afford not to.

The CareerBuilder study coupled with a recent nine state survey of restaurant workers published in The Journal of Food Protection that reported that one out of eight restaurant workers has come to work at least twice in the past year while suffering from diarrhea or vomiting clearly illustrates the public health problem, even crisis, that we face every day simply by going to work or frequenting a food establishment.

Foodborne illness kills 5,000 people annually, according to the study authors, and sickens some 76 million.

Bottom line, paid sick days allow workers to stay home and get better rather than infecting you and I.

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